12th June, 1854

Today was a very hectic day. When we awoke, the sun was covered bye humongous black clouds. The leaders of our wagon train decided that we should stay put in the forest where we would get less wet than out in the open prairie. We are nearin the end of our journey. If the whether allows, we will make it to Bent’s Old Fort in two days time. All of the children in our group are a runnin amuck outside in the rain. I think someone should go over there and give them a good beatin. If we don’t get to a movin most peoples will run out of meat ‘n’ thins necessary to livin. My poor friend, Lucy Henderson Deady, has a sister is sick with the fever. Our doctor, Missus Mary Jane Megquier’s husband, just seems to be makin thins worse. No one wants to tell Lucy, but she don’t seem like she’s gunna last too much longer. There was a terrible accident that happened in our train last week. Mary Rockwood’s child fell under the Deady wagon and no one noticed she was missin until that nite. Several of the men went back to look for her and they found her with wheel tracks up and down her body. Mary has been really sad and removed since then. Most people are sleepin now even though it’s the middle of the day. We are all exhausted and await a safe and happy arrival in Santa Fe where this new family we have become will go their separate ways and form new lives for themselves. Most of us will go on to be farmers makin our livin on dirt and hard work. I like this idea of farmin because there aren’t many people out here to tell me I can‘t work because I’m a lady. I plan to work on the farm right alongside my pa and brother Francis. If any one gives me a hard time I plan on just givin them a piece of my mind. I think that us women can do just as much as the men do, and we can do it while wearing petticoats. Everyone tells me I should act more ladylike and wear dresses and scarves more often. Most days though, I usually wear a pair of trousers and my hair tied up in a string. I do the hard chores just like all the boys round here. Most people dislike the way I dress and think I’m a minion of the devil. My family was forced to move west to start a new life without the witch fantasy hanging round our heads. Most people have been nice so far. I hope I can live a normal life in the west. Everyone at camp is waking up now, so it must be time for dinner.

11th November, 1854

We arrived here in Santa Fe one week ago today. Life seems to be treating us fairly for once. No one here seems to see me as a witch. Lucy Henderson Deady’s sister died the day after I wrote last. It seemed she had been overdosed with Laudanum. Life is great here. We have gotten off to a great start. Our homestead is close to town and the nearby river. The money and food we brought is only enough to last us the winter so the farm will be important come spring. My pa is willing to let me work with him and Francis since we will be needin the help we plan on growing corn, pumpkins, squash, beans, and other vegetables and flowers. My ma has some beautiful flower seeds she brought back from Massachusetts. She will have the prettiest garden in the whole state of New Mexico. I will write soon when we have settled down completely.

By: Rebecca Ketcham